

THE  
DUTY and BENEFIT  
OF  
**Frequent Communion.**  
IN A  
**SERMON**

Preached at St. Peter's Church in *Lincoln*,  
upon *Passion Sunday*, 1688.

By **WALTER LEIGHTONHOUSE, A. M.**  
Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of  
*Huntingdon*, late Fellow of *Lincoln Colledge* in *Oxon.*  
and now Rector of *Wallingburgh* nigh *Lincoln*.

Published at the Request of many that heard it Preached.

*Et quoniam non indigne accipere, sed potius debere et debere  
vult. Item, quod si non debet, sed potius debere et debere  
quod si non debet, sed potius debere et debere  
quod si non debet, sed potius debere et debere*

L O N D O N,

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DUTY and BENEFIT  
OF

*Frequent Communion*  
**Imprimatur,**

Concio cui titulus (*The Duty and  
Benefit of Frequent Communion*)

Octob. 26.  
1688.

GWIL NEEDHAM

LONDON  
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Dover Lane 1688

To the Right Honourable  
THEOPHILLUS Earl of HUNTINGDON,  
One of His Majesties Most Honourable  
Privy Council, &c.

May it please your Lordship,

**A**lthough the following Discourse  
be, for the most part, built upon  
that Authority that needs no  
Patronage to defend it; yet I no sooner  
agreed to the making of it Publick, but  
I saw a necessity of affixing your Lordship's  
great Name before it: Not to remind  
you, My Lord, of your Duty, of which  
you need no Monitor, but your own  
Active Piety; but to let the World know,  
That whatever of Worth it carries in it,  
has had its Origen from your Lordship's  
Encouragement and Support, and there-  
fore must justly become your Votary. I  
confess

confess, My Lord, 'tis too slender a signification of that unfeign'd and undelible Gratitude I owe to you; but if your Honour please to make an Addition to your former Favours by the acceptance of this first Testimony of my Regards, I hope, My Lord, if Success crown my undertakings, to acknowledge them very shortly in some greater Instance. In the interim, the great Importance of your Publick Charge making me sensible that your minutes are sacred, and that therefore 'twould be a Piacle to invade them with a tedious Address, I shall only add, That the height of the Honour I most passionately aspire to, is, that my deserts may give me the Title of,

Octob. 30.  
1688.

My Lord,

Your Honour's most affectionately devoted,  
and most humble Servant,

WALTER LEIGHTONHOUSE.



LUKE XXII. ver. 19.

— *This is my Body which is given for you : do this in remembrance of me.*

**A**Mongst all those Blessings in which Mankind seems to take satisfaction, there is none with which we are more deeply affected, than Deliverance from Calamities : For as the Passions of *Fear* and *Grief* are ( according to \* Philosophers ) more impressiv upon our Senses than those of *Hope* and *Love* ; so it must needs fall out, that the release from the former will be more satisfactory than the completion of the latter.

\* Αγαθόν ὃ ἰσθὶ πι-  
ρῆσαι ὑπολθῆναι,  
ἡδύμεθα, ἰδὲ ὅ μὲν  
λαοὶ ἐπιδουλοῦντο ἡ  
ἡμεῖς ἰδὲ οὐκ ἔμελλεν  
ὑπολθῆναι, λυτῶμε-  
θα, καὶ ὅ μὲν λαοὶ πο-  
θέμεθα. Alcibiades  
Doctr. Plat. p. 72.

For let our *Hopes* be buoyed up with the rapid Torrent of an expected Felicity, and let our *Love* swim in the full Stream of our Desires effected, the first is but the glimmering of Satisfaction, and the latter quickly dies or grows languid by fruition. But on the other hand, let our Thoughts be benighted with the sad Apprehensions but of an imminent *Danger*, with

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what

what a busie activeness do we bestir our selves to the *evading* of it? And if by chance we lie under the heavy Pressures of a present Grievance, with what regret do we shrink under our Burthen, *Curse* our ill *Faté*, and repine and murmur at the Author and Instruments of it?

\* *Edm. Far*  
*in Dour. Phot.*  
Epist. 46.

All which being so, What \* *Transports* of *Passion* must we needs be in, when we compare our past with our present state? Impendent Danger on one hand; exquisite without a parallel, inexpressible Deliverance on the other, effected without our assistance: Faln Man grovelling in Sin, and hastning to eternal Ruine; a gracious God *speeding* our Rescue by his own Misery. Here's in one Scale *Mankind* distracted through Fears, and rack'd with the sad Thoughts of a future state: Here's in the other, an innocent *Redeemer*, no less so through the sense of our Sins and Transgressions: Here's the Raptures of Joy succeeding the Pangs of *Despair*, and Mercy seated where Judgment ought to have taken place. Here's Sin in one expiated by the innocent Death of another; and here's a kindness freely dispens'd, which Men and Angels could not otherwise have purchas'd: Here's our *Holy Jesus* giving *his Body* for the Redemption of our Souls,  
and

and requires nothing for the kindness, but that we will not forget it. *This is my Body which is given for you ; This do \* in remembrance of me.*

\* *Εἰς τὴν ἱ-  
στορίαν ἀναμνη-  
σκῶντες, ὑπὲρ  
ἐμοῦ, ὑμῶν, τὴν  
ἐκτίσιν.*  
for my  
Commemora-  
tion.

Which words import as much as though our Saviour had said thus :

My beloved Friends and Followers, that you were brought into a low miserable Condition by the Sin of your first Parents, you cannot but be sensible ; and that you were out of a capacity of freeing your selves from those Chains of Darkness, you are no less sensible ; which dreadful Condition of yours, I your Saviour being touch'd withal, was highly concern'd which way to snatch you out of this *Fire of Affliction* ; and seeing that nothing less than mine own Blood could effect it, and that too by being shed upon an accursed and disgraceful Tree, I resolv'd to go through that direful Scene, and to offer up my Body as a Sacrifice for you, of which this Bread which I now break, is a Sign or Emblem. Now I see you pretend (as indeed you ought) to have a great Value and Esteem for me your dying Saviour, you seem very sensible of my being cloath'd with Misery, *and wrinkled with* *sable Cares* for your sakes : And withal, you seem to be desirous of some opportunity where-



in my Name at my Table, \* still remembering, <sup>\* Μνησκόμενοι</sup>  
discourfing of, and laying before you the Ago- <sup>πίστεως τῆς ἐν</sup>  
ny and bloody Sweat, the bitter death, Crofs, <sup>τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ</sup>  
and Paffion, and all the meritorious Sufferings <sup>ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ</sup>  
of me your Mafter and Redeemer. And now <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
certainly you muft needs acknowledge that <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
this is no very fevere Penance which I enjoyn <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
you; and therefore if ( after all your fpecious <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
Pretences ) any of you fhould either wilfully or <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
carelefsly neglect this fmall piece of Service, <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
which I fo earneftly enjoyn you, I fhall then <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
really believe that all your Proteftations are no- <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
thing but Noife and Shuffling. If you have <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
any Value therefore for this Body of mine, which <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>  
is given for you, This do in remembrance of me. <sup>ἐκείνου τοῦ</sup>

This is the fubftance of our Saviour's words  
in my Text, from which ( thus briefly explain'd )  
I fhall endeavour to fhew you the great rea-  
fonablenefs of a frequent Communion, and the mon-  
ftrous Indifcretion, as well as Difobedience, if  
we refufe to perform this Injunction of our  
Holy Jefus, denying or neglecting to do this in  
remembrance of him. And this I fhall do, firft,  
from the eafinefs of the Service, and the fender  
returns which Chrift requires of us for thofe  
great Favours he has conferr'd upon us.

2ly. From the vast Advantages which will accrew from a frequent reception, in order to the encreasing those Graces which are absolutely necessary to Salvation.

The first shews us our *Duty*, the second, the great *Benefit* of receiving the *Holy Sacrament*. The latter of which being a Topick not frequently inculcated, may perhaps be the more grateful to you for its Novelty.

I begin with the first, viz. to endeavour to shew you the great reasonableness of a frequent *Communion* from the easiness of the Service, and the slender returns which Christ requires of us for so great Favours bestowed upon us.

Had our God, like those of the Heathens, requir'd us to \* eat our own Children in Sacrifice, or by way of Atonement to † offer up our dearest Friends, or the \* noblest of our Relations ; had he bid us cut and slash our beloved Flesh, and bathe our selves in our own Blood ; had he bid us lay down our life for him, and commemorate his Death by rushing *our selves into our own* : Nay, had he requir'd but the first Fruit of our Flocks, and of our Herds, of our Oil, and of our Meal ; these perhaps

\* Porphy. de abstinentia ab esu animal. Plutarch. Pausanias.

† Clem. Protrepti. Dionysius Halicarn. lib. 1.

\* Το παρ' υμων τιμιωτερον εσθιειν, η ο μινον αλογων ζων αιματα περιποιειν, αλλα η αυθιγα, δια το παρ' υμων ετιστημι τε η ευχαριστω αυτου, τωι προσοχον το υψι εορδασιν το αιμα ετιμιωτερον. Justin. Mart. Apol. 1.



perhaps to some would have seem'd *hard Sayings*, and *grievous Commandments*; and the kindness of our Redeemer, tho' inexpressibly great, would have seem'd to have been purchas'd by us at too dear a rate.

Nay, if we reflect upon the state of our Forefathers, and therein view those almost \* *innumerable Sacrifices* and Offerings which were enjoin'd them under the Oeconomy of the Law, the lazy humor of our days would repute that too severe a Task for us now, altho' our Reward do vastly transcend theirs.

But that the Mercy of God may surmount not only our *Merits*, but our *Expectation* too, we have a Saviour who hath delivered us not only from the *Curse*, but from the *Burthen* of the *Law* likewise. He hath fully absolv'd us from one, and hath laid no Injunction upon us in the room of the other. He only tells us, that he thinks that we have some reason to *remember* this kindness, and not to bury his Favours in oblivion; and therefore in order thereunto, he invites us to come now and then to take a small Repast with him, as a *Memorandum* that he has been our Friend and Benefactor.

He

\* *Hōi aiua-  
tas ē, an-  
tis, ē, Supra-  
māton. Vid.  
Justin. Mart.  
in Apol. 2.  
Euseb. Dem.  
Evang. l. 1.  
c. 10. & lib. 5.  
c. 23. & vid.  
Weems Ex-  
ercitat. vol. 2.  
P. 55.*

He requires nothing of us, but that we will let him have our Company at Supper, there to think, to meditate and discourse of those obliging Favours which he hath long since done for us; the effects of which do yet, and will for ever continue with us. And now is this such an hard piece of Service? Has not our Blessed Redeemer merited as much at our hands as this comes to? Doth he not however deserve *something* as an acknowledgment? And if he do, what less can we do for him? Should he have left it to our selves to have made choice of some Method whereby to attest our acceptance, what easier, what cheaper way could we have invented? 'Tis but what we do every day at home; *Eating* and *Drinking*, and at a cheaper rate too, it costs us nothing; and therefore if we refuse *doing this* which is so mighty facil, it appears we will do nothing for him.

\* Author of  
the whole Du-  
ty of Man:  
*Laurel Calling*,  
p. 134.

For indeed ( as \* one very well observes )  
“ this is not only a Disobedience, but an Unkind-  
“ ness which strikes not only at the Authority, but  
“ at the Love of our Lord, when he so affects  
“ an Union with us, that he creates Mysteries  
“ only to effect it; when he descends even to  
“ our Sensuality, and because we want spiritual  
Appetites,

'Appetites, puts himself within reach of our  
 'natural ; and as he once veil'd his Divinity in  
 'Flesh, so now he *Sacramentally* veils even that  
 'Flesh under the form of our corporal nourish-  
 'ment, only that he may the more indissolvably  
 'unite, yea, incorporate himself with us. When  
 'I say he does all this, we are not only impi-  
 'ous, but inhumane if it will not attract us.  
 'Nay farther, when he does all this upon the  
 'most endearing Memory of what he has before  
 'done for us, when he presents himself to our  
 'Embraces in the same form wherein he present-  
 'ed himself to God for our Expiation, when he  
 'shews us those Wounds which our Iniquities  
 'made, those Stripes by which we were healed,  
 'and that Death by which we are reviv'd ; we  
 shall be strangely rude and impious if we turn  
 our Backs, and refuse to *commemorate* so great a  
 Blessing. But,

2<sup>ly</sup>. If we be not so ingenuous as to be mov'd  
 by Gratitude and Obedience, let us be so wise as  
 to do it for Interest, for advantage ; and therein  
 let us consider, that,

1<sup>st</sup>. Our Faith is hereby confirm'd.

2<sup>ly</sup>. Our Hope is by this strengthened.

3<sup>ly</sup>. Our Charity is thereby enlarg'd.

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4<sup>ly</sup>. Our

4ly. Our Thankfulness to God is by this enflam'd: And,

5ly. Our Repentance is hereby promoted.

Which five Topicks, if I can make out, may, methinks, be sufficient to evince the reasonableness of this our Blessed Saviour's Institution, and be Engagement enough to incite us to *do this in remembrance of him.*

Of these therefore in Order, and,

First, By a Participation of the blessed Sacrament our Faith is confirm'd. 'Tis, I confess, the

\* Mr. Hales of  
Baton's Tracts.  
p. 57.

Accusation that a \* Great Man of our own lays upon our Church, that through a too unreasonable fondness of this great *Mystery* we *abuse it to many ends*, amongst which he reckons this, That we teach, That it confirms our Faith in Christ; whereas indeed, saies he, the receiving of it is a sign of Faith confirmed; and men come to it, to testify that they do believe, not to procure that they may believe. But by the favour of that Learned Person, we acknowledge with him, that it is a sign of Belief, and that no man ought to approach that Sacred Ordinance \* without Faith in Christ's Me-

\* *Μετὰ τὴν*  
*ἐκείνην ἑορτήν*  
*ἐκείνην* Li-  
turg. S. Chrys.  
& S. Jacob. &  
vid. Chrys.  
Homil. 24.  
in 1. ad Cor.

rits: But yet we *insist* likewise, that there are degrees of that Faith. For that all habits are encreas'd by being exercised, a slender Philosopher will

will inform you; and that this Ordinance requires great Exercises of the Grace of Faith, a Novice in Divinity will inform you likewise. For we have in this action the most lively Emblem and Representation of God's love to Mankind; we see God in the most severe instance of Tryal ( even that of sacrificing his own Son ) faithfully accomplishing his Word; and therefore what ground of distrust can we have, that he will not in concerns of an inferiour nature, approve himself to be a God that cannot lye, nor deny himself? How can we in any case distrust his Mercy, or suspect his Bounty, when in the highest instance we have experienced his Fidelity? If therefore our dependance on the Almighty Goodness begin to faint, or our Faith begin to stagger; if the greatness of our Sins deter us from the hopes of his Mercy, let us in the Blessed Sacrament view him shedding the Blood of his own Son to advance our Interest, and to redeem us from the Curse, Gal. 3. 13. and then certainly we cannot chuse but argue thus with the \*Apostle; *If God* \*Rom. 8. v. 32. *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?*

2ly. Our Hope is by this strengthened.

There is nothing which doth more deject a

considering man, than the Thoughts of his false Condition: For what can such Meditations suggest less unto him, than the frowns of an angry God, together with the fatal loss of happiness in this World, and eternal Felicity in the next. And such dreadful Apprehensions as these must needs *ruffle and discompose our Spirits*, and cause a *Regret* and *Dispondency* through the whole man. Now when our Souls are put upon the rack by such tormenting Fears: when the heinousness of our Sins reminds us of the sadness of our Condition: When our *Hope* is well nigh lost, and Desperation hath almost swallowed us up, will not the sight of Christ crucified recruit our dying *Hopes*; and summon together our scatter'd Spirits? May we not entertain comfortable hopes of Mercy, when even *before our Eyes* we see the *Lamb of God* groaning, bleeding, dying for our Sins? Will it not highly encourage us to consider, that those Agonies by which our Sins were expiated, were sufficient to content the most rigorous Severity? Must it not needs abate the Wounds of our Conscience, and diminish our Fears whilst we are *Eye-witnesses* of his *Crucifixion*, and do in the blessed Sacrament even *Behold the Lamb of God*  
that



that took away the Sins of the World: John 1. 19.

'Twould certainly be a disparagement to the Efficacy of our Lord's Passion, should we after all this \* despair of Mercy, be utterly disconsolate, and thereby be mov'd away from the hope of the Gospel, Col. 1. 23. But

3ly. Our Charity is by this enlarg'd, and that,

1st. To the whole Church.

2ly. To each particular Member.

First, Our Love and Charity is by this enlarg'd to the whole Church. 'Tis observ'd by \* one, That the neglect of the Sacrament hath occasioned not only the Debauchery, but the Division of the times; and that the frequent observance of it, would reduce us not only to Sobriety, but to Union likewise. And in the \* Infancy of Christianity as well as † some Ages since those Persons were look'd upon as Disturbers of the Peace and Tranquility of the Church, who refus'd these sacred Mysteries. And the word *αἱρεσις*, which the Greek Fathers do so frequently use for the Blessed Sacrament, seems to intimate no less than

\* Τὸ εἶναι ἐν  
ἁγίᾳ ἀν-  
τιθέσει, καὶ  
τῇ ἀπο-  
ρίᾳ τοῦ  
ἁγίου πνεύματος  
τῶν τῶ Θεοῦ.  
Clem. Alex.  
Strom 3.

\* Concil. Apostol.  
Πλάττει τὰς αἱρέσεις,  
αὐτὰς, καὶ οἱ ἁγιοὶ  
ἀκούσαντες, μὴ ἐξου-  
ποῖαν διὰ τὴν ἀπει-  
ρίαν, καὶ τὴν ἀγνοίαν μετα-  
λαβόντες, ὡς ἀπαθείας ἐμ-  
ποδίζοντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,  
ἀποκρίσας, καὶ. Can.  
Apost. 9.

† Concil. Antioch.  
Concil. Agath. Πλάττει  
τὴν ἐκκλησίαν οἷς τῶν ἁ-  
γίων, καὶ οἱ ἁγιοὶ  
Syn. Antioch. Can. 2.

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a gathering together of Christians in Love and Amity, to return thanks for a common Benefit. And that this Interpretation is genuine, we may reasonably guess from that Practice of the Primitive Christians of sending some part of the Analects or Remains to absent Friends, tho' of other *Parishes*; as Pledges and Tokens of Love and Agreement in the Unity of the same Faith, as \* *Eusebius* tells us. in *Irmaeus* his Epistle to Pope Victor; which Constitution continued in force till it was interdicted by the Council of *Laodicea*, which was after the middle of the fourth Century. And altho' that Canon was for some reasons abrogated; yet all along those who refused to join in such sacred Assemblies, did ( in the opinion of all good men ) tacitly accuse them-

selves to be Enemies to the Church, and \* Renegado's to Christianity. And ( this was the very reason why ( as *Justin Martyr* tells us ) the absent in his time communicated as well as the present; each absent Parishioner having the consecrated Elements carried home to him, to testify, that altho' some important Affairs, or bodily Indisposition intervened, yet they were of the same Mind, and of the same Heart, Acts 4. 32. Nay,

\* Hist. Eccl.  
lib. 5 c. 26.  
† Πλει τῷ μὲν  
τῷ α' καὶ οἱ  
ἀβελόχας  
καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν  
τῷ Παύλῳ οἱ  
ἐπίσκοποι  
καὶ οἱ πρεσβυ-  
τέρους μὴ  
συνεσθῆναι. Can.  
14.

\* Μὴ εἰς ἑκείνους  
ἐκείνους τῷ  
συνεσθῆναι, ὡς  
ἀπὸ τῶν οἱ, &c. ἱ-  
στ. in Epist. ad Ephes.  
† Δυσκὸν ἐκείνους  
μετὰ τὸν μὴ ἀλλο-  
&c. καὶ τῶν οἱ  
ἀποστόλων. Apol. 2. p. 77.

so absolute a necessity they thought there was for the reception of the *Holy Sacrament*, that in one of the Canons of *Timotheus* sometimes Patriarch of *Alexandria*, you may see these words,

\* Εἰς τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἀδυνατοῦντος τοῦ ἀγίου μυστήριον.

\* Vid. *Mede's* Works, p. 30.

If any of the faithful be a *Demoniack*, i.e. a Lunatick or Madman, he ought (in his *lucida intervalla*) to partake of the holy Mysteries. For this is the great \* Test of our Religion, and the only *argument* that can give any Evidence that we are none of those that cause Divisions amongst us, *Rom. 16. 17.*

\* Qui in natali Domini, Paschate & Pentecoste non communicant Catholici non cre-

dantur, nec inter Catholicos habentur. Concil. Agathen. Can. 18.

But, besides all this, methinks when we see the Spouse of the Church sacrificing himself for the Peace and Unity of it; when we see himself bequeath this as a Legacy with his dying breath, \* *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you.* When we hear him enjoining it to his \* Church, and see him bleeding to accomplish it, we cannot for shame make those Wounds wider by our Divisions, and only for an *adversary*, something perhaps in it self indifferent, rent the seamless Coat of Christ. No, we are Dissenters from the \* excellent

\* *John. 14.*

27.  
† *Mar. 9. 50.*  
*Rom. 12. 18.*  
*Heb. 12. 14.*

\* *Harum & aliarum ejusdem Traditionis praecepta, & fides observantia.* Tertul. in lib. de Coron. Militis.

Rules.

Rules of Primitive Christianity, if for such niceties as these, we play away the Peace of the Church; and 'tis a great sign that our Wounds are very putrid, if the Blood of Christ himself will not cement them.

2ly. The receiving of the Sacrament is a strong Engagement to the Practice of Charity towards every particular Person.

And this Charity I shall } 1st. Love;  
branch out into } 2ly. Beneficence.

And first, That the receiving of the Sacrament must needs enhance our Love one to another, and unite us with the Bond of Peace and Charity, cannot be doubted by any who will but give himself time to consider, that in Holy Writ it is intitled a \* Love-feast, and a † Feast of Charity; and pursuant to this in the beginning of this Christian Service, the Deacon was anciently wont to cry, *Μη τις καταμαχηται*. Let no man have ought against his Brother; and then followed the *Osculum sanctum*, the Kiss of Reconciliation. And thus the Fathers of the first Council of Nice took *Sacrificium purum*, as appears Canon 5. where they expound *ἀλλήλων καὶ ὁμολογίας ἀγαπῆς*, to be that which is offered, *μετὰ τὴν ἁγίαν κοινωνίαν*, all Malice and Hypocritie

\* Jude 12.  
† 1 Cor. 11.

pocrisie being laid aside ; agreeable to that of our blessed Saviour, *Matth. 5. 23. When thou bringest thy gift to the Altar, &c. go first and be reconciled to thy Brother, &c.* And indeed, how it can be otherwise, I do not well see ; for we have there the Emblem of a *pardoning God*, and a *loving Saviour* ; we there see Mercy triumphing over Justice, and a compassionate Jesus advancing our Felicity beyond our Hopes. And can we then insist upon the slender nicety of an offence, rigorously exacting Satisfaction from our fellow-Servant, when we hear our great Lord say, *I forgave thee all thou owest ? Matth. 18. 28.* Can we do less than pardon those little Reproaches and Indignities from our Brother, when we know \* *we deserve far worse*, and yet see that our innocent Redeemer when he was reviled, reviled not again ? *1 Pet. 2. 23.* How can we do less than love him for whom Christ died ? *Rom. 14. 15.* And since we see that God so loved us, as to lay down his life for us, surely we must needs conclude with the Apostle, *1 John 4. 11. That we ought also to love one another.* But above all, how can we who are by the natural frame of our Constitutions, \* subject to the same Passions, do otherwise than forgive our Brother, when 'tis upon

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that

\* Οὐ γὰρ ἴδμεν  
τὴν ἀδικίαν ἡμε-  
τέραν αὐτοῦ  
τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅτι  
τοῦτα πάντα  
ἔλασεν. *Epist.  
Enchir. c. 48.*

\* Hiero. in  
carm. Pythag.

that very condition that we are in *this Sacrament* to receive our own Remission, *Matth. 18. 33, 35.*

2ly. Our Beneficence is hereby likewise enlarg'd.

For what can more create a Respect and Esteem in me for my indigent Brother, than to see in the Sacrament Omnipotence it self veil'd with Misery, and clad with scanty Poverty? to see my Redeemer disrob'd of his Glory, and (as it were) sanctifying a poor disgraceful Condition by his own \* Example? How can I condemn my poor Neighbour, when I see my Redeemer and my God willingly for my sake embrace the same state? In a word, How can it but open the Bowels of my Commiseration, when I consider, that had it not been for one \* poor Beggar, I my self had been eternally miserable?

Such Considerations as these, no doubt, the Apostles and Primitive Christians had, when they were so \* *universally charitable as to seek out, and send Relief to every indigent Member.* Agreeable to which, we retain an † *ancient laudable Constitution of contributing at the Lords Table to the necessities of our Brethren; plainly intimating, that we think that a mighty proper season, and a most convenient place for such*

\* Longum iter  
per precepta,  
breve & effi-  
cax per ex-  
empla. Sen.  
Ep. 6.

\* Δι' ἡμᾶς ἐτ-  
πύχυσεν,  
2 Cor. 8. 9.

\* Καὶ ἐχρησ-  
τῆς ἀντιμύ-  
ναι πᾶσι ἐν-  
κοινῶν. Just.  
Mart. Apol. 2.  
p. 98.

† Καὶ τὸ ἐν-  
κοινωνεῖν αὐ-  
τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ  
ἐκείνου, καὶ  
ἐκείνους ἐκεί-  
νους, &c.  
καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ  
ἐκείνου ἐκεί-  
νους, &c.

Just. Apol. 2. 99.



acts of Piety, as if we there see our Redeemer's low Condition, and were sensibly affected with his Indigency ; and therefore since it was too late to do it to himself, yet we were resolv'd by way of Gratitude and Obedience to relieve him in his poor Members, which he takes as *done to himself*; for \* *I was an hungry, and ye fed me, &c.* <sup>• Matth. 25. 35.</sup> *inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my poor Members, ye did it unto me.*

And indeed, were there nothing in it at first farther than the bare Offering, yet I dare be bold to say, That the frequent Practise of it would beget so great an Esteem and Value for the action, that it would upon all occasions exert it self. For Humanity and Beneficence are so suitable to our Nature, that they win upon the Soul by every repeated Act, and do insensibly ingratiate themselves in our Affections by an habitual Practise. But then they must do much more so, if that be true, which an ingenious \* modern Writer of <sup>• Ladies Calling, 139.</sup> our own asserts, That *there is not in all the Mystery of Godliness, in all the Oeconomy of the Gospel, so expedite, so infallible a means of the growth in any Grace, as a frequent Participation of this blessed Sacrament.*

For, Fourthly, Our Thankfulness to God is by this enflam'd.

D 2

And

Ecclesia im-  
molar in cor-  
pore Christi  
sacrificium  
laudis. Aug.  
lib. 1. in adv.  
leg. cap. 20.

\* Cyril. Ca-  
tech. Mystag.  
3. Chryl. in  
Horn. 18. in  
2 Cor. & Li-  
turg. Basil.

\* Αὐτὸς ἐν-  
χρῆς καὶ εὐχαρι-  
στίας. Justin.  
Apost. 2.  
Εὐχαριστῶ-  
ντες προσποι-  
εῖσθε τῷ κυ-  
ρίῳ καὶ ἀντιμαρτυ-  
ρεῖσθε ταύτῃ, &c. Liturg. S. Marc. in Eccl. Alexandr.

And for evidence of this, we need go no farther than to look into the design of its Institution, which our Church-Catechism tells us, was for a thankful Remembrance of the Death of Christ, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby. And accordingly St. Cyril tells us, That when the People began to bring their Offering to the Altar, the Priest was to say, \* *Ἀνα τὴν καρδίαν, Lift up your Hearts*: To which they answered, *Ἐξουδο πρὸς τὸν κύριον, We lift them up unto the Lord.* Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ κυρίῳ, *Let us give thanks unto the Lord.* The People answered, \* *Ἄξιον καὶ δίκαιον, It is meet and just we should do so.* Which Versicles our English Liturgy in her Communion Service doth (you know) without any alteration retain to this day, to denote to us how proper a season that has been thought in all Ages of Christianity, to offer up a Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving. And for this reason, no doubt, it is frequently call'd by the Fathers, the Eucharist, to intimate, that as it is a Sign of that second Covenant which God made with man, so it ought to be received with \* *Blessing and Thanksgiving.* But besides, methinks it is preposterous to imagine, that this action which assaults our very Senses, and strikes our Heart

by the most lively representation of God's greatest Mercy, should not ( if we have any Gratitude ) move us to a chearful acknowledgment.

'To see God ( as one expresses it ) send down  
'his very Bowels amongst us to witness his Com-  
'passion, to satisfie for us by his own Death,  
'and attach himself for our liberty; to see our  
Redeemer and our Friend clad with Beggary and  
Disgrace, that we may thereby abound in Wealth  
and Honour ; To see him executed on a Cross  
as a Malefactor and a Slave, that we may there-  
by be freed from the dominion of Satan ; to see  
him humbly stoop from the Joys of Heaven,  
that we may be nobly advanced thither ; to see  
him who knew no Sin, to be made Sin, and a Curse  
for us, and that not whilst we were his Friends,  
but when we were in open hostility with him : Vid. Dr. Barrow's Passion Sermon.  
These are such Acts of kindness, as none could,  
none would perform, but he whose Goodness is  
as extensive as is his Greatness ; and therefore  
if we have any spark of *Thankfulness* in us, the  
*visible Proof* of these things must needs blow  
it up into the Ardburs of Affection, and make  
us more and more mindful of, and thankful to  
that God that sav'd us.

But then when we farther consider our own  
Demerits,

\* Rom. 3. 9.  
 † Rom. 5. 16,  
 18.  
 || Gal. 3. 10.

Demerits, and the miserableness of our former Condition, being \* *under Sin*, † *under Condemnation*, || *under the Curse*: When we are reminded of the consequent of these things, and consider that nothing but that blood which we see now shed, could expiate for us; and when we withal consider that there are still many thousands, who, whilst we are surrounded with the Sun of Righteousness, are wrapp'd up in Darkness and Idolatry; that they starve with Hunger, or surfeit with Profaneness; whilst we are partaking of that *Bread that came from Heaven*. Certainly: such Thoughts as these will nobly advance our Thankfulness, and make us daily more and more to thirst after those *Eucharistick Bowls*, and fill our Hearts with *passionate Eulogies* to the Author of our Redemption.

Fifthly, Our Repentance is hereby promoted. We usually hate and detest the fawning Treachery of *Judas* that betray'd our Saviour, the black Suggestions of the *Jewish* Priests that did impeach him, the rude Carriage of the Populacy that did abusively insult over him; we abhor those poisonous Tongues that revild him, and those bloody Hands that smote him. How can we then reflect on those Sufferings which are there represented to us, without extream Displeasure

pleasure against those Sins of ours which were the occasion of them? For, alas! the *Jews* were but the *Instruments* of his *Passion*; the long train of our Iniquities were the chief, the real Actors \* *Isa. 53. 5.* of that direful Tragedy. \* *He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities.* † *Rom. 4. 25.* † *He was delivered for our Offences, and became a* ‖ *Gal. 3. 13.* ‖ *Curse for us*; that is, It was we, who by our Sins did impeach, did adjudge, did sentence him to death. 'Twas our Obscenity which besmear'd his glorious Face with Spittle, and our profane Oaths, Cursing and Blasphemy were the false Witnesses that forg'd the black Indictment against his sacred Person. 'Twas our Wantonness that expos'd him naked; and our Surfeiting and Drunkenness that gave him *Vinegar and Gall to drink.* 'Twas the Virulency of \* *Psal. 57. 4.* our \* *Tongues* which was the *Spear* that gor'd his precious Side, and our deep Sleep of Sin made him give up the *Ghost.* And can we then chuse but hate those Sins which were the perfidious Betrayers of our dearest Friend? Shall we not utterly detest those unjust Slanderers, who have abus'd the Lord of Righteousness? Shall we not for ever abhor those barbarous Murderers that have slain our own Brother?

I re-

\* Hist. Imper.  
Rom. a Pedro  
Mexia. Vit.  
Jul. Caf.

\* Vid. Testa-  
mentum Cæ-  
sar's in Pedro  
Mexia.

I remember 'tis recorded in \* ancient Story, that when *Antony* was in a Funeral Oration rhetorically copious in perswading the *Romans* to revenge the Death of *Cæsar*, he expatiates of the great excellency of the Person, shews that he was crown'd with Valour, Wisdom, and Industry; recounts his many Victories, shews his Conduct, and the several Stratagems he made use of, acceyphers the vast kindness he had for that flourishing City, and how he had attested it by \* ample Legacies at his Death, as well as by his Courage and Resolution whilst he liv'd; and that after all this, he should be barbarously murder'd by his own Senators, was a Crime so heinous, that the Gods themselves stood amaz'd at the horribleness of the Fact. All this they hear, tho' with a mixture of Wrath and Pity, yet with somewhat of Patience. But when he shews them the *Princely Vestment*, and in it the Holes and the Blood which were occasioned by those murdering Instruments; When they see the *Purple* chang'd into *Scarlet*, and read the violence of his Enemies by the number of his Wounds which they see in his Garment; This adds Wings to their passionate Resentment, and spurs forward their inflam'd Indignation, they presently snatch Instruments of  
Revenge



Revenge out of his own Funeral Pile, and destroy,  
if not the Persons, the Habitations of the Mur-  
derers. Now to bring this to our selves. We  
may perhaps hear or read the *Passion of our Savi-  
our* elegantly decyphered; and have the greatness  
of his Sufferings, and the vastness of his Love de-  
scribed to us with all the Flourishes of Rhetorick,  
and not be much transported at the Discourse:  
But can we in the *Blessed Sacrament* see his Wounds  
gaping, his Blood pouring forth, and his Flesh bro-  
ken in pieces, without Indignation against our  
selves, who were the direful Actors of this Scene?  
No sure, if we have any love for our dying Lord,  
or any respect for a crucify'd Redeemer; if we  
have any regard to the Sufferings of a beloved  
Friend, or any kindness for our greatest Benefa-  
ctor, unless we design to re-act Judas his part,  
and to *crucify afresh the Lord of Life*; Heb. 6. 6.

\* Unless, whilst we boast our selves Christians, \* Ἐγὼ μὲν Χριστιανὸν λέγωμαι καὶ οὐκ ἔχω τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ· ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἑαυτόν, ὁ ἀγαπᾷ τὸν Θεόν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς; ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν Θεόν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ὁ ἀγαπᾷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ.  
we design to practise and espouse the manner of  
the *Jews*; Briefly, unless all our Pretences to Re-  
ligion and Christianity be but Ceremony and  
Complement, we shall at such a spectacle as this,  
be stricken with hatred of our Sins, and a full  
purpose to decline them for the time to come.

But if we do not proceed thus far, there will  
be no end of it. ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν Θεόν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ὁ ἀγαπᾷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ. Ο-  
rig. con. Cels.  
lib. 5. 272.

E

how.

however by our receiving be one step made towards a new Life: For let the *Debauchees* of the Age disregard the Methods of Salvâtion, and put the evil day never so far from them, yet if upon any account (be it Political or other) they appear at the *Wedding of the Lamb*, they dare not approach without something of a Wedding Garment, some more than ordinary Preparation for this great Interview; there will be at least some few Prayers, and faint Resolutions, some *superficial Repentance*, or *Ahab-like Humiliation*; and who knows but these small beginnings, may, like the *Cloud of Elijah*, *overspread* the whole man? Who knows but this almost-Convert may find so much Pleasure and inward Comfort from this interval of Impiety, as may occasion a Perseverance? For indeed these weak Intentions do usually continue for some few days after they have received; for the most stout-hearted Sinner cannot so far conquer his Fears, as to rush from the *Lord's Table* into a *Brothel-house*, or to remove from the *Cup of Blessing* to the *Cup of Devils*. No man, I dare say, is such an accomplish'd Sinner, as to resolve, when he hath a view of his crucify'd Saviour, that he will by his Sins and Impieties, *recrucifie that Lord of Life*. No; Men have however, good Resolutions

lutions at such a time as this: 'Tis at least like Seed sown upon a Rock, where it hath some Earth; and who knows but a peculiar influence of Heaven may enable it to bring forth Fruit? However there will accrew from this piece-meal Preparation this advantage, that it will in some measure bring us to a recollection of our selves, and for some little time stop the career of our Sin, which is always the first Fruits of Repentance.

Thus having, I hope, plainly convinc'd you of the great reasonableness of this our Blessed Saviour's Institution, and shewn you the great inducements which we have of *doing this in remembrance of him*; and that, if not as we are oblig'd by Duty, yet as it tends so vastly for our *Interest*, and the improvement of those Graces, without a large share of which, it is impossible for us ever to see God; I should now proceed to draw some few Inferences by way of Application; but before I do that, give me leave to declare, that I desire not to be mistaken in what I have already deliver'd, as if I went about to encourage men to receive the *Holy Sacrament* remissly, or without preparation. No, the summ of what I have said is only this; That if my great Lord and Master absolutely command me without restriction; to do such or such a piece of Service for him, I think I

more highly affront him in the careless neglect and never attempting of it, than I can do in the performing of it, tho' there be some Defects, some *Sphalmata* and *Errata* in the doing of it; I had better shew my good Will and Obedience to a known Command, tho' I am not thoroughly cleans'd according to the Purification of the Sanctuary, than disavow my blessed Redeemer by a thorough neglect of so positive a Command. And now what I have to say, by way of Application, shall (lest I should abuse your time) be summ'd up briefly in these two Inferences.

First, That the dark Heathen World may more reasonably expect Salvation, than those Christians who wilfully neglect the holy Sacrament.

'Tis St. Paul's Rule not to judge those that are without the Churches: But yet if we adhere to the common square of human Opinion, we may justly conclude him to be in a better Condition as to his future state, who hath liv'd up to that shadow of Reason and Conscience, which was the bare dictate of Nature, than he who has known the way of Truth, and yet has departed from it. Sins of Ignorance are not clad in so black a dye, as those which are accompanied with a stiff premeditated Knowledge: Nor are we so angry at the impertinent peevish actions of little Children, as

at the resolute Affronts of him who falls not under the denomination of a *Minor*. And can we then judge less, but that God will more unkindly resent the wilful Abuses and Neglects of Mankind, than the frailties of human Infirmary, or the mistakes of blind *Ignorance*, or a misguided Zeal? He does not *desire to reap where he has not sown*, but where his hand has been plentiful in dispersing the Seeds of a pure Knowledge and inlightned Religion, there he expects a large increase of his Glory, or else the end of that People shall be *Fire and a Curse*. Now have we not read and heard of the superstitious bravery of the Pagan World, in the Adoration they pay to their Gods and Pagods? And can we then refrain blushing at the lazy temper of a profane Christian, who will do nothing for the sake of his Redeemer? Can we without disdain against our selves see them rigorously oppose Nature it self in offering their own Bodies in Sacrifice to appease their supposed angry Deities? And can we at the same time so highly abuse our Maker, as to deny a performance to those Injunctions which he has laid upon us? Could the Pagan World be satisfied, that their false Gods requir'd nothing of them but what was mighty facile in its observance, with what *Jo's* of Joy would they receive such glad tidings, and readily endea-

your

vour a performance? And then may we not highly presume that they will rise up in Judgment against, and condemn that People (be they who they will) that will not do as much in the Worship of the God of *Israel*? who will not approach his Temple, tho' at hand, and in the corners of the Streets, whilst the dark Pagan chearfully undertakes the severity of a long and tedious Pilgrimage, who will not fall down in \* a commemorative Sacrifice to the *Holy Jesus*, whilst, the other offers not only whole *Hecatombs* of Bulls and Goats, but even sacrifice their own Infant-offspring, the Fruit of their Body, for the Sin of their Soul?

\* H. Doria &  
Εκκλησιας  
λαβοντες  
αυτον & εφελον  
αυτον & εφελον  
αυτον & εφελον  
Clem. A-  
lexand. lib. 7.  
Stromat. And  
Περὶ παρθε-  
νης αἱρεσι-  
στος, Doria λαβον-  
τες, & εφελον  
αυτον & εφελον  
αυτον & εφελον  
αυτον & εφελον

And this is the first Inference I make, That the dark Heathen may more reasonably expect Salvation, than those Christians who wilfully neglect the Holy Sacrament.

Secondly, We may, from what has been said, infer, That if we neglect this easie Injunction, we do thereby sufficiently denote to the World, that we value our worldly Interests, our Pleasures, or our Profits beyond the means of Grace, and the hopes of Glory.

For let our Employment be what it will, do we not upon all occasions fit and prepare our Affairs by a previous consideration, and put them into such a posture as shall tend the most to our Advantage?



vantage? Do we suffer every little diversion to cut off the entail of our Profit? Will the Northern Blasts of a severe Winter, or the scorching Sun-beams of the Dog-days, detain the Merchant from his Voyage and the Exchange, or the Tradesman from his Market? Will a few drops of Rain, or a visit from a Friend, divert any of us from the prosecution of a good Bargain? And yet all and any of these are, we think, excuse enough for our not coming to the Sacrament. *I am not worthy*, saith one, and therefore *I cannot come*. What man, I pray you, ever us'd the like expression, when he had the tender of a fair Estate, or some worldly Emolument? *I have not time*, says a second, *to prepare my self, and may not come without my Wedding-Garment*. But hast thou not at the same time extravagantly wasted as many opportunities *inter vinum & oleum*, or betwixt the Comb and the Glass, the dressing thy decaying Body, as would, had they been well employ'd, have fitted and prepar'd thy Soul? *My Wife, my Husband, or my Child is sick and indispos'd*, and therefore, says a third, *I cannot leave them*. Would this really keep thee from the Prosecution of thy worldly affairs? Wouldst thou not beg thy Friends pardon for some few hours absence, being to make a very advantageous purchase, or to take possession of some large Estate? Wouldst thou quit  
thine

thing Interest rather than thy Comfort, and  
 die poor and a Beggar, rather than to be thought  
 civil or ungentle? In a word, let us not be  
 interrogatories as these to our selves, and let our Con-  
 sciences answer them in the negative, we must  
 needs confess our selves inexcusable, which  
 which will not palliare our neglect of any worldly  
 Entertainment, shall yet be thought excuse enough  
 for our rude and negligent behaviour towards  
 Son of God. To conclude; we had much better be  
 plain and ingenuous in the matter, and declare  
 once for all, That we will not obey the Commands  
 of our dying Saviour, than thus to flout, and  
 make pitiful Evasions in a matter so momentous.  
 Our Damnation would be much easier, would we  
 so far devest the Hypocrite, as to declare, that we  
 would not serve the Lord; rather than to condemn  
 our selves under the pretext of Christ's Disciples,  
 and yet to tax him of such severity, as to declare  
 by our continual neglect, that we cannot do this in  
 remembrance of him. To whom with the Father  
 and Holy Spirit, three Persons and one God, be  
 ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Praise, Might,  
 Majesty, and Dominion henceforth, and for ever-  
 more. Amen.

F I N I S.